

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A presence management apparatus connected to a first apparatus and a second apparatus via a network, the presence management apparatus comprising:

presence update means for updating a first user's presence received from the first apparatus and a second user's presence received from the second apparatus, wherein the first user uses the first apparatus and the second user uses the second apparatus;

matching condition registration means for registering a matching condition for another user's presence received from the first apparatus and designated by the first user and a matching condition for another user's presence received from the second apparatus and designated by the second user; and

matching decision means for deciding if the first user's presence matches the matching condition designated by the second user and if the second user's presence matches the matching condition designated by the first user when the matching condition registration means performs registration processing and/or the presence update means performs update processing.

2. The presence management apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising matching notification means for notifying the first and/or the second apparatus that, if the matching decision means decides that the both matching conditions are satisfied, a

match has occurred.

3. The presence management apparatus according to claim 1,

wherein the matching condition registered by the matching condition registration means includes a combination of a logical sum and/or a logical product of a condition for two or more presences.

4. The presence management apparatus according to claim 1,

wherein, for use when it is decided that the first user's presence matches the matching condition designated by the second user, the matching decision means comprises matching candidate storage means for storing therein an identifier of the first user and an identifier of the second user as one of matching candidates and

wherein, if it is decided that the second user's presence matches the matching condition designated by the first user, the matching decision means searches the matching candidates, stored in the matching candidate storage means, to decide if the first user's presence already matches the matching condition designated by the second user.

5. The presence management apparatus according to claim 4,

wherein, if it is decided that the first user's presence does not match the matching condition designated by the second user, the matching decision

means registers the identifier of the first user and the identifier of the second user as a matching candidate.

6. The presence management apparatus according to claim 4,

wherein, if it is decided that the first user's presence matches the matching condition designated by the second user, the matching decision means decides that the both matching conditions are satisfied.

7. The presence management apparatus according to claim 4,

wherein, for the first user and the second user whose identifiers are stored as the matching candidates, the matching decision means decides if the first user's presence matches the matching condition designated by the second user and, if it is decided that they do not match, deletes the identifier of the first user and the identifier of the second user from the matching candidate storage means.

8. An information delivery system in which a first apparatus, a second apparatus, and a presence management apparatus are connected via a network

wherein the presence management apparatus comprises:

presence update means for updating a first user's presence received from the first apparatus and a second user's presence received from the second

apparatus, wherein the first user uses the first apparatus and the second user uses the second apparatus;

matching condition registration means for registering a matching condition for another user's presence received from the first apparatus and designated by the first user and a matching condition for another user's presence received from the second apparatus and designated by the second user;

matching decision means for deciding if the first user's presence matches the matching condition designated by the second user and if the second user's presence matches the matching condition designated by the first user when the matching condition registration means performs registration processing and/or the presence update means performs update processing; and

matching notification means for notifying the first apparatus that, if the matching decision means decides that the both matching conditions are satisfied, a match has occurred,

wherein the first apparatus comprises means for delivering information to the second apparatus.

9. The information delivery system according to claim 8,

wherein the matching condition registered by the matching condition registration means of the presence management apparatus includes a combination of a logical sum and/or a logical product of a condition

for two or more presences.

10. The information delivery system according to claim 8,

wherein, for use when it is decided that the first user's presence matches the matching condition designated by the second user, the matching decision means of the presence management apparatus comprises matching candidate storage means for storing therein an identifier of the first user and an identifier of the second user as one of matching candidates and

wherein, if it is decided that the second user's presence matches the matching condition designated by the first user, the matching decision means of the presence management apparatus searches the matching candidates, stored in the matching candidate storage means, to decide if the first user's presence already matches the matching condition designated by the second user.

11. The information delivery system according to claim 10,

wherein, if it is decided that the first user's presence does not match the matching condition designated by the second user, the matching decision means of the presence management apparatus registers an identifier of the first user and an identifier of the second user as one of matching candidates.

12. The information delivery system according to claim 10,

wherein, if it is decided that the first user's presence matches the matching condition designated by the second user, the matching decision means of the presence management apparatus decides that the both matching conditions are satisfied.

13. The information delivery system according to claim 10,

wherein, for the first user and the second user whose identifiers are stored as the matching candidates, the matching decision means of the presence management apparatus decides if the first user's presence matches the matching condition designated by the second user and, if it is decided that they do not match, deletes the identifier of the first user and the identifier of the second user from the matching candidate storage means.